United Nations A/68/845–S/2014/269

General Assembly
Security Council

Distr.: General
23 April 2014
English
Original: Arabic

General Assembly
Sixty-eighth session
Agenda items 33 and 110

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Prevention of armed conflict

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Identical letters dated 11 April 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

On instructions from my Government, I wish to draw the attention of the Security Council to the following information.

In March 2011, the regime in Syria resorted to repression against the fraternal Syrian people, which had come out in a peaceful revolution to assert its legitimate rights. Since then, it has twisted and distorted the facts in order to deflect attention from that repressive response. The regime has denied its flagrant violations of international law and international human rights law. In numerous letters to United Nations entities, it has levelled a charge of terrorism against those States, including Qatar, that support the rights of the Syrian people. The letters are filled with lies and unsubstantiated claims. The most recent example, dated 10 April 2014 (A/68/836-S/2014/260), targets Qatar. The State of Qatar will not be drawn into such underhanded attempts to deflect attention from the tragedy that the regime has inflicted on the Syrian people. It does, however, wish to recall the following points.

When the popular revolution in Syria began, the State of Qatar spared no effort in calling for the legitimate demands of the fraternal Syrian people to be heard. It argued that the regime's response to those demands was a dangerous one. However, the regime left its entreaties unanswered, preferring instead to ramp up its repression.

Qatari diplomacy believes in the importance of the peaceful settlement of disputes. The State of Qatar therefore pursued its efforts to find a political solution to the crisis through the League of Arab States, as the competent regional organization. In so doing, it complied with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations, which upholds the role of regional organizations in the peaceful settlement of disputes. Qatar chaired the Arab ministerial committee on the situation in Syria, which visited Damascus on 26 October 2011. It conveyed to the Syrian regime the

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appeal of the Arab States for an end to the security escalation and for the voice of the people to be heard. However, the regime in Syria continued to hold the lives of its own people in contempt. It ignored the efforts of the Arab States, all the while denying that it was doing so.

Nevertheless, the State of Qatar did not despair of a peaceful solution to the crisis. Through the League of Arab States, it worked towards and led the visit of a ministerial delegation to the United Nations on 31 January 2012, in accordance with Article 52, paragraph 2 of the Charter. The delegation briefed the Security Council, warning that the Syrian crisis would have dangerous repercussions if the international community could not swiftly find a solution. Unfortunately, the Syrian regime persisted in its repression. The result was the current predicament of Syria, in which tens of thousands have died, millions of civilians have been displaced or driven out of the country, and chemical weapons and internationally prohibited weapons have been used to horrific effect against innocent civilians. The regime did not leave matters there; it also decided to twist and distort the facts. Among other things, it has focused on Qatar's actions to help the fraternal Syrian people and press for a political solution to the crisis.

With such a political solution in mind, the State of Qatar welcomed Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), which sought to alleviate the suffering of the fraternal Syrian people. The resolution stresses that the political solution represents the only sustainable opportunity to resolve the situation in Syria peacefully. The State of Qatar participated in the first meeting of the Action Group for Syria, which took place on 30 June 2012 in Geneva. The final communiqué of that meeting was endorsed by the Security Council as a basis for the political solution to the crisis. Qatar also took part in the high-level Geneva Conference on Syria ("Geneva II") and made intensive efforts to convince the Syrian opposition to participate. Yet the Syrian regime has shown at every opportunity that it has no desire for a political solution to the crisis and is not genuinely committed to negotiations. Instead, it has adopted delaying tactics, as United Nations officials stated in a briefing before the General Assembly on 14 March 2014.

In its past and current actions regarding the crisis in Syria, the State of Qatar has been motivated by its commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international conventions, including the right of peoples to self-determination and a life of dignity. It has sought to protect and promote human rights, while safeguarding the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria. It follows that Qatar completely rejects crimes against humanity, war crimes and other grave violations of international law and international human rights law. Qatar also rejects and condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, irrespective of its source. It has been at the forefront of States supporting important international initiatives, such as dialogue among civilizations and cultures and dialogue among religions and peoples. It spares no effort in promoting those concepts, which encourage peaceful coexistence and the rejection of terrorism, violence and extremism.

The State of Qatar therefore affirms that all of its actions to help the Syrian people stem from the Charter of the United Nations; the relevant resolutions of the League of Arab States, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the United Nations; and international law and norms. Qatar will continue to cooperate with the

international community to support and assist the Syrian people and bring an end to its suffering.

The State of Qatar calls on the entities of the United Nations, including the Security Council, to take every necessary measure to ensure that the civilian population of Syria is protected from the crimes of the Syrian regime, and to take steps to hold officials accountable for the war crimes and crimes against humanity that have been committed in Syria. The perpetrators must not be allowed to go unpunished.

I should be grateful if the present letter could be issued as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 33 and 110, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Alya Ahmed Saif **Al-Thani**
Permanent Representative